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UAW's clash with Big 3 automakers shows off a more confrontational union as strike deadline looms

AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) — A 46% pay raise. A 32-hour week with 40 hours of pay. A restoration of traditional pensions. The demands that a more combative United Auto Workers union has pressed on General Motors, Stellantis and Ford — demands that even the UAW's own president calls "audacious" — are edging it closer to a strike when its contract ends Sept. 14. The automakers, which are making billions in profits, have dismissed the UAW's wish list. They argue that its demands are unrealistic at a time of fierce competition from Tesla and lower-wage foreign automakers as the world shifts from internal combustion engines to electric vehicles.



Continued on Page 2 United Auto Workers members walk in the Labor Day parade in Detroit, Monday, Sept. 4, 2023.

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UAW's clash with Big 3 automakers shows off a more confrontational union as strike deadline looms

Continued from Front

The wide gulf between the sides could mean a strike against one or more of the automakers, which could send already-inflated vehicle prices even higher.

A potential strike by 146,000 UAW members comes against the backdrop of increasingly emboldened U.S. unions of all kinds. The number of strikes and threatened strikes is growing, involving Hollywood actors and writers, sizable settlements with railroads and major concessions by corporate giants like UPS.

Shawn Fain, who won the UAW's presidency this spring in the first direct election by members, has set high expectations and assured union members that they can achieve significant gains if they are willing to walk picket lines.

In a speech to a Labor Day parade crowd in Detroit on Monday, Fain said that if the companies don't come up with a fair contract, "come Sept. 14, we're going to take action to get it by any means necessary." Fain has characterized the contract talks with Detroit automakers as a form of war between billionaires and ordinary middle-class workers. Last month, in an act of showmanship during a Facebook Live event, Fain condemned a contract proposal from Stellantis as "trash" — and tossed a copy of it into a wastebasket, "where it belongs," he said.

Over the past decade, the Detroit Three have emerged as robust profit-makers. They've collectively posted net income of \$164 billion over the past decade, \$20 billion of it this year. The CEOs of all three major automakers earn multiple millions in annual compensation.

Speaking last month to Ford workers at a plant in Louisville, Kentucky, Fain complained about one standard for the corporate class and another for ordinary workers.

"They get out-of-control



United Auto Workers President Shawn Fain holds up a sign at a union rally held near a Stellantis factory Wednesday, Aug. 23, 2023, in Detroit.

Associated Press

salaries," he said. "They get pensions they don't even need. They get top-rate health care. They work whatever schedule they want. The majority of our members do not get a pension nowadays. It's crazy. We get substandard health care. We don't get to work remotely."

UAW members have voted overwhelmingly to authorize its leaders to call a strike. So, too, have Canadian auto workers, whose contracts end four days later and who have designated Ford as their target.

The UAW hasn't said whether it will select one target automaker. It could strike all three, though doing so could deplete the union's strike fund in under three months.

On the other hand, if a strike lasted even just 10 days, it would cost the three automakers nearly a billion dollars, the Anderson Economic Group has calculated. During a 40-day UAW strike in 2019, GM alone lost \$3.6 billion.

Last week, the union filed charges of unfair labor practices against Stellantis and GM, which it said have yet to offer counterproposals. As for Ford, Fain assert-

ed that its response, by rejecting most of the union's demands, "insults our very worth."

All three automakers have countered that the union's charges are baseless and that they're seeking a fair deal that would allow them to invest in the future.

Marick Masters, a business professor at Wayne State University in Detroit, suggested that the strong U.S. job market and the companies' outsize profits have given Fain leverage in negotiations. In addition, he noted, the automakers are poised to release a slew of new electric vehicles that would be delayed by a strike. And they have only a limited supply of vehicles to withstand a prolonged walkout.

Even Fain has described the union's proposals as "audacious" in demanding the restoration of traditional defined-benefit pensions for new hires; an end to tiers of wages; pension increases for retirees; and — perhaps boldest of all — a 32-hour week for 40 hours of pay.

Currently, UAW workers who were hired after 2007 don't receive defined-benefit pensions. Their health ben-

efits are less generous, too. For years, the union gave up general pay raises and lost cost-of-living wage increases to help the companies control costs. Though top-scale assembly workers earn \$32.32 an hour, temporary workers start at just under \$17. Still, full-time workers have received profit-sharing checks ranging this year from \$9,716 at Ford to \$14,760 at Stellantis. At Detroit's Labor Day Parade, workers said a strike appears likely now.

Jason Craig, a worker at a Stellantis parts warehouse near Detroit, said his company appears most likely to be the strike target, but he said the union might go to Ford because it seems more family-oriented. Fain reiterated Monday that all three companies remain strike targets.

Perhaps the biggest issue blocking a contract agreement is union representation at 10 EV battery plants that the companies have proposed. Most of these plants are joint ventures with South Korean battery makers, which want to pay less.

"These battery workers deserve the same wage and salary standards that gen-

erations of auto workers have fought for," Fain told members.

The union fears that because EVs are simpler to build, with fewer moving parts, fewer workers will be needed to assemble them. In addition, workers at combustion engine and transmission plants will likely lose jobs in the transition; they'll need a place to go. Fain, a 54-year-old electrician who came out of a Chrysler factory in Kokomo, Indiana, is among several labor leaders across the economy who have been escalating their demands and flexing their muscles. So far this year, 247 strikes have occurred involving 341,000 workers — the most since Cornell University began tracking strikes in 2021, though still well below the numbers during the 1970s and 1980s.

Masters suggested that the automakers wouldn't be able to quickly replace striking workers. The tight job market, diminished interest in manufacturing jobs and comparatively modest wages would make it difficult to hire enough workers. Some auto workers regard the UPS contract, with a \$49-an-hour top wage for experienced drivers, as a benchmark for their negotiations. Others say they're just hoping to get near that figure.

But automakers say a generous settlement would stick them with costs far above their competitors' just as they start producing more EVs. The inability to bring Hyundai-Kia, Nissan, Volkswagen, Honda and Toyota factories into the union has weakened the UAW's leverage, said Harry Katz, a labor professor at Cornell.

If you include the value of their benefits, workers at the Detroit 3 automakers receive around \$60 an hour. The corresponding figure at foreign-based automakers with U.S. factories is just \$40 to \$45, Katz said. Much of the disparity reflects pensions and health care. □

The govt. is eager to restore powers to keep dangerous chemicals out of extremists' hands

By REBECCA SANTANA

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The government is worried about the safety of chemical facilities across the country after its power to keep dangerous substances out of the hands of extremists lapsed a month ago.

The Department of Homeland Security has long had the ability to inspect facilities where chemicals are used or stored to make sure their security systems are in place. And the facilities themselves have been required to vet prospective employees for any terrorism links.

But the program, called the Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standards, expired July 28 after Congress failed to renew it. Homeland Security officials say this left gaping holes in the country's national security, and they are calling on Congress to act quickly when it returns this week. "The risk that terrorists could access and weaponize the dangerous chemicals produced in these facilities increases by the day," Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas told attendees at the



The Department of Homeland Security logo is seen during a news conference in Washington, Feb. 25, 2015.

Chemical Security Summit held in northern Virginia last week.

The program requires any facility that has a certain quantity of any of a long list of "chemicals of interest" to report the information to the Department of Homeland Security. The Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency, which falls under DHS, then determines whether the facility is considered high risk and therefore must develop a security plan. The agency

assesses the plan to make sure it addresses things like physical security as well as cybersecurity, and then it does inspections to make sure companies are in compliance.

There are more than 300 chemicals on the list, including substances like chlorine and sodium nitrate. There are about 3,200 high-risk facilities across the country, according to agency data. The regulations apply not just to chemical manufacturing or distribution com-

panies but to any facility that uses the chemicals in certain quantities, such as those related to agriculture, plastics or pharmaceuticals, to name a few. Facilities also send the names of prospective employees to Homeland Security so they can be checked for links to extremist groups. CISA official Kelly Murray said at the conference that before the program expired, about 300 names per day were being run through databases.

Associated Press

That has stopped.

Congress gave the department the authority to begin the chemical security program in 2006, and it went into effect the following year. But Congress also has to renew the authority every few years. So far it has. This summer, the House overwhelmingly voted to reauthorize it. But then the Senate failed to do so after Sen. Rand Paul raised objections.

Paul, a Kentucky Republican, said in a July 26 Congressional speech that such regulations favor big businesses because they create a barrier to new companies coming into the market and that even if these regulations didn't exist, companies would still keep security measures in place out of self-interest.

"My guess is if the program didn't exist, they would still all have fences and barbed wire and protections against terrorism because they want to protect their investment," Paul said. He said the legislation was being rushed though the Senate without enough consideration, such as whether it was duplicating other government programs. □

Biden says he went to his house in Rehoboth Beach, Del., because he can't go 'home home'

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE

Associated Press

REHOBOTH BEACH, Del. (AP)

— There may be no place like home but President Joe Biden says he cannot go to his.

Unprompted, Biden approached reporters Sunday in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, after he went to Mass at St. Edmond Roman Catholic Church to say he was not on vacation.

"I have no home to go to," said Biden, who lives at the White House on weekdays and spends most weekends in Delaware, where he has two homes.

The U.S. Secret Service has

been doing work on his longtime primary residence

in Wilmington, Delaware, to make it more secure "in a



President Joe Biden speaks to members of the media after attending Mass at St. Edmond Roman Catholic Church in Rehoboth Beach, Del., Sunday, Sept. 3, 2023.

Associated Press

good way," he said.

It has been at least a few months since he last spent a night there.

"So I have no place to go when I come to Delaware, except here, right now," he said, speaking of his other home, in Rehoboth Beach. "I'm only here for one day." Biden arrived on the Delaware coast on Saturday night after he spent the early part of the day in Florida surveying damage from Hurricane Idalia.

He had been scheduled to spend Labor Day weekend here, but changed his plans after the storm.

He travels to Philadelphia

on Monday to speak at an AFL-CIO rally.

Two weeks ago, he and his family spent a week on vacation in Nevada's Lake Tahoe region.

The Republican National Committee regularly criticizes Biden for vacating the White House on weekends. He first told reporters about the security upgrades to his Wilmington home in April, when he went to the beach house after returning from a trip to Ireland.

Asked Sunday if he was saying that he's homeless, Biden said that was not the case. □

Minnesota prison reaches resolution with inmates who refused to return to their cells in heat wave

STILLWATER, Minn. (AP) — A Minnesota prison has “resolved without incident” a situation involving about 100 inmates in one housing unit who would not return to their cells Sunday in what one former inmate there called an act of “self-preservation” amid dangerously high temperatures in the region.

The situation was “calm, peaceful and stable throughout the day,” a Department of Corrections spokesperson said in a statement, adding that “incarcerated individuals in the unit indicated dissatisfaction” because the understaffed facility had to limit inmates’ time out of their cells.

But advocates positioned outside of the Stillwater prison, some of whom have family members inside, said inmates are fed up with the excessive heat, lack of air conditioning and limited access to showers and ice during on and off lockdowns over the past two months.

The prison is in Bayport about 25 miles (40 kilometers) east of Minneapolis, which was under an afternoon heat advisory for temperatures approach-



A fleet of emergency vehicles sit parked outside of Minnesota Correctional Facility-Stillwater prison in Bayport, Minn., on Sunday, Sept. 3, 2023.

ing 100 degrees Fahrenheit (37.7 Celsius).

“My organization got calls from inmates who are actually inside” starting at 6:30 a.m., said Marvin Haynes of Minnesota Wrongfully Convicted Judicial Reform, whose brother is an inmate at Stillwater.

“This morning, they decided that they weren’t going to lock into their cells,” said David Boehnke of Twin Cities Incarcerated Workers

Organizing Committee.

The department confirmed that inmates have been in lockdown status because of the holiday weekend, meaning they are kept in their cells, with “limited access facility-wide to out-of-cell time for showers, phone use and recreation.” The facility remains on lockdown now, and all inmates have returned to the cells. The executive director of the union representing

Stillwater’s correctional officers, Bart Andersen, said in a statement that the incident is “endemic and highlights the truth behind the operations of the MN Department of Corrections with chronic understaffing.” Andersen said such conditions upset inmates because of restrictions on program and recreation time “when there are not enough security staff to protect the facility.”

Haynes, Boehnke and Cathy Stroud Caldwell said the inmate action was an impromptu response to unsafe conditions, including access to clean drinking water, which they say is reportedly brown in color. The department said those claims “about a lack of clean water in the facility are patently false.”

“It was just ... we’re not going back to that hot cell with no drinking water and not being able to shower,” Haynes said they hope to meet with officials “to talk about the conditions that inmates are living in” and “solutions for the future.”

Intense heat waves across the country have led to amplified concern for prison populations, especially those in poorly ventilated or air-conditioned facilities. Two correctional officers stayed in a secure control area and in contact with facility staff since the emergency lockdown status was initiated at 8 a.m. There were no injuries, according to the Department of Corrections.

Members of a crisis negotiation team and the Special Operations Response Team were deployed “out of an abundance of caution.” □

Associated Press

Biden will nominate longtime aide to become US ambassador to UNESCO

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A longtime aide to President Joe Biden who is a senior adviser in Vice President Kamala Harris’ office is Biden’s choice to represent the United States at the United Nations agency devoted to education, science and culture. The U.S. recently rejoined the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization after a five-year hiatus initiated by Biden’s immediate predecessor in the White House, Donald Trump.

The Democratic president’s choice to become the U.S. permanent representative to the Paris-based UNESCO,

with the rank of ambassador, is longtime aide Courtney O’Donnell, according to a White House official,

who spoke Monday on the condition of anonymity to discuss the nomination before a formal announce-

ment.

O’Donnell currently wears two hats: She’s a senior adviser in Harris’ office and acting chief of staff for Harris’ husband, second gentleman Doug Emhoff, and lends her expertise to a range of national and global issues, including gender equity and countering prejudice against Jews, a top issue for Emhoff, who is Jewish.

O’Donnell also was communications director for Jill Biden, when she was second lady during Joe Biden’s vice presidency when Barack Obama was president. O’Donnell helped Jill Biden raise awareness and support for U.S. military families and promote com-

munity colleges.

She has extensive experience in developing global partnerships, public affairs and strategic communications, having held senior roles in two presidential administrations, nonprofit and philanthropic organizations, national political campaigns and the private sector, according to her official bio.

O’Donnell most recently oversaw global partnerships at Airbnb.

Former White House chief of staff Ron Klain said O’Donnell is trusted by colleagues worldwide.

“This is a fantastic pick and she will do a fantastic job at UNESCO,” he said in a statement. □



The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization logo is pictured on the entrance at UNESCO’s headquarters in Paris, Oct. 17, 2016.

Associated Press

Putin says he won't renew the grain deal until the West meets his demands

By The Associated Press

Russian President Vladimir Putin said Monday that a landmark deal allowing Ukraine to export grain safely through the Black Sea amid the war won't be restored until the West meets Moscow's demands on its own agricultural exports.

Ukraine and its Western allies have dismissed the Kremlin's demands as a ploy to advance its own interests.

Still, Putin's remarks dashed hopes that his talks with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan could revive an agreement seen as vital for global food supplies, especially in Africa, the Middle East and Asia.

Russia refused to extend the deal in July, complaining that a parallel agreement promising to remove obstacles to Russian exports of food and fertilizer hadn't been honored. It said restrictions on shipping and insurance hampered its agricultural trade, though it has shipped record amounts of wheat since last year.

Putin reiterated those complaints Monday, while also telling reporters that if those commitments were honored, Russia could return to



Russian President Vladimir Putin waves to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan as he leaves after their talks at Russia's Black Sea resort of Sochi, Russia, Monday, Sept. 4, 2023.

Associated Press

the deal "within days."

Erdogan also expressed hope that a breakthrough could come soon. He said Turkey and the U.N. which both brokered the original deal have put together a new package of proposals to unblock the issue.

"We believe that we will reach a solution that will meet the expectations in a short time," Erdogan said at the news conference held with Putin in the Russian re-

sort of Sochi.

Earlier, German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock lashed out, saying Putin's "game with the grain agreement is cynical."

"It's only because of Putin that the freighters don't have free passage again," she told reporters in Berlin.

A lot is riding on the negotiation. Ukraine and Russia are major suppliers of wheat, barley, sunflower oil and other goods that de-

veloping nations rely on.

Data from the Joint Coordination Center in Istanbul, which organized shipments under the deal, show that 57% of the grain from Ukraine went to developing nations, with the top destination being China.

Grain prices shot up after Russia pulled out of the deal but have since fallen back, indicating that there isn't a big crunch in the market for the moment.

But failure to revive the agreement will have "drastic impacts" in countries such as Somalia and Egypt that rely heavily on Black Sea grain, according to Galip Dalay, an associate fellow at the Chatham House think tank in London. Putin is looking for some relief from sanctions and at the same time is engaged in a "war of narratives," Dalay said, because the Russian leader "doesn't want to come across as the bad guy in the eyes of the global south as a result of this food insecurity."

Ukraine and its allies have often noted that Russia's move left many developing nations in the lurch, since so many were recipients of the grain.

Perhaps in an effort to address that accusation, Putin said Monday that Russia was close to finalizing an agreement to provide free grain to six African countries. Last month, he promised shipments to Burkina Faso, Zimbabwe, Mali, Somalia, Eritrea and Central African Republic.

The Russian leader added that the country will ship 1 million metric tons (1.1 million tons) of cheap grain to Turkey for processing and delivery to poor countries. □

Two military officers are arrested in Congo for leading a protest crackdown that killed 43 people

By JUSTIN KABUMBA

Associated Press

GOMA, Congo (AP) — Two high-ranking military officers in northeast Congo were arrested Monday for taking part in a crackdown on protests last week that left 43 people dead and another 56 severely injured, authorities said.

Interior Minister Peter Kazadi said police arrested Commanders Mike Mikombe and Donat Bawili, who respectively headed the Republican Guard unit and the Congolese armed forces regiment in Goma, the eastern city where the violence unfolded.

Defense and security forces in the Central African

nation used lethal force last Wednesday to repress planned anti-U.N. protests in the city. A government delegation arrived in Goma on Monday to hold hearings and other proceedings "to establish responsibility," the interior minister said.

"We have no interest in hiding anything. The whole truth will be known," Kazadi said. Authorities called on families of the people killed in Goma to come forward with information for the inquiry. On Aug. 23, Goma's mayor banned a protest organized by a sect called the Natural Judaic and Messianic Faith Towards the Nations, known colloquially as Wazalendo. Its support-

ers planned to demonstrate against the regional East African Community organization and the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Congo.

The U.N. mission, which is known by its French acronym of MONUSCO, has faced increased pressure to withdraw from Congo after more than two decades in the conflict-burdened country.

Advocacy group Human Rights Watch said Thursday that before the protests could take place, armed forces fired on Wazalendo demonstrators in the streets, kicking off an "apparent massacre" in the city. National authorities

said 43 civilians died and 56 were badly hurt.

The U.N. human rights office said more than 220 people

were arrested in connection with the planned protests and the subsequent crackdown. □



Arrested members of the Wazalendo sect are sat and lined up in Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Wednesday, Aug. 30, 2023.

Associated Press

A drone attack on Myanmar border police reportedly kills 5. A resistance group claims responsibility

By GRANT PECK
Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — A drone attack on a police headquarters in a major border town in eastern Myanmar has killed at least five officials including a senior army officer and a district administrator, members of two emergency rescue teams and media reports said Monday.

The attack, carried out Sunday evening in two stages, is believed to be the deadliest aerial bombing targeting high-ranking security and administrative officials since armed resistance was launched more than two years ago against the military that seized power in February 2021 from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi. The takeover was met with peaceful nationwide protests, but after security forces cracked down with lethal force, many local armed resistance groups were formed and loosely organized into what is called the People's Defense Force, or PDF. It's the armed wing of Myanmar's shadow National Unity Government, which views itself as a country's legitimate administrative body. The PDF has allied



A Myanmar military soldier hoists a national flag during a ceremony to mark the 69th anniversary of Independence Day in Yangon, Myanmar on Jan. 4, 2017.

themselves with major ethnic guerrilla groups in border regions that have been carrying out armed struggle against the army for decades, seeking greater autonomy. Federal Wings, a resistance group that conducts drone warfare in cooperation with the People's Defense Force and its allies belonging to ethnic Karen armed groups, claimed responsibility for Sunday's attack in a statement posted Monday on their Facebook

page. The group also said it learned that five people, including the battalion commander, had been killed. Lt. Col. Aung Kyaw Min, the temporary commander of a battalion based in Myawaddy township, and a traffic police officer died Sunday in a hospital after the attack, said two rescue workers, speaking on condition of anonymity because they feared arrest for disclosing the information. Myawaddy District Admin-

istrator Soe Tint, his aide-de-camp Tun Tun Nyein and a clerk died on the spot when drones dropped two bombs while they were inspecting the damage caused by a drone attack about an hour earlier, they said. The district police office compound is located in downtown Myawaddy, a key trading center in southeastern Kayin state on the border with Thailand. They added that 10 security and administrative offi-

cials were being treated in township and military hospitals in Myawaddy while four others including the head of the district police office were sent to a private hospital in Mae Sot, just across the border in Thailand, which had better medical care. One of the rescue workers said he was informed that a police officer there became the sixth fatality on Monday, but the death could not be confirmed. The military information office, the Tatmadaw True News Information Team, said in a statement that some members of security forces and civil servants were injured after the Karen National Liberation Army and the People's Defense Force dropped two bombs from a drone. It did not acknowledge any deaths.

Drones have become crucial for the resistance forces, which are outmanned and outgunned by the military that's carried out airstrikes unimpaird. Initially, smaller drones with lighter payloads were used, but now the opposition groups are using more sophisticated systems to drop explosives precisely on military targets. □

Associated Press

Greece is working with Israel on AI technology to quickly detect wildfires

By MENELAOS HADJICOSTIS
Associated Press

NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP) — Greece is working with Israel on developing artificial intelligence technology that would help in early detection of dangerous wildfires, the Greek prime minister said Monday. After talks with his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu and Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides in the Cypriot capital of Nicosia, Kyriakos Mitsotakis also said that Israel could be brought into the European Union fold when it comes to civil protection initiatives to better coordinate firefighting efforts. Israel and Cyprus are

among several countries that have dispatched firefighting aircraft and crews

to help battle wildfires in Greece that consumed vast tracts of forest over the

last two months, including the EU's largest such blaze on record that claimed the lives of 20 people.

Mitsotakis said Greece could act as a proving ground for Israeli AI technology in early detection of wildfires.

"We are already talking to Israel about AI-based solutions that will offer us early detection capabilities," Said Mitsotakis.

Netanyahu said the three leaders discussed "going well beyond" dispatching firefighting aircraft and crews by deploying AI systems for early detection.

"This is really one of those areas where when we say we'll do it better together,

there's no question that that's the case," Netanyahu said.

The three leaders said they delved into how to harness recent natural gas discoveries in Israeli and Cypriot waters of the Mediterranean Sea.

Netanyahu said decisions on how Israel and Cyprus will export natural gas to foreign markets will have to be made within the next three to six months.

Israel and Cyprus are looking into plans for a pipeline that would convey offshore natural gas from both countries to the east Mediterranean island nation where it would be liquefied for export by ship. □



Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides, center, Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, right, and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu sit, during their meeting at the presidential palace, in Nicosia, Cyprus, Monday, Sept. 4, 2023.

Associated Press

Aruba's Bocas: home to the rarest fossil reefs on the planet!



(Oranjestad)—If you've been to the northern coast of Aruba already, you've probably noticed how the ground differs entirely from the sandy beaches on the southern part of the island. These hard surfaces, with sharp bumps and holes are actually fossilized coral reefs, of which its growth and changes can be traced back to the last glacial period.

On May 30 2023, geoscientists, Dr. Patrick Boyden from the Marum research

faculty at the University of Bremen, Prof. dr. Alessio Rovere from the Ca' Foscari University of Venice and Prof. dr. Gianfranco Scicchitano, from the University of Bari Aldo Moro, presented their research on these fossilized coral reefs at the University of Aruba.

Their focus for their research included studying the health and formation patterns of these coral reefs, and to investigate how these reefs have responded and can respond



to fluctuating sea levels or extreme weather, like hurricanes and tsunamis.

Through underwater and land surveillance, and 3D models of the reefs, they were able to narrow down when these formations started to take place. They were also able to track the fluctuation of sea levels during the past hundred or even thousands of years, and the effects that this fluctuation has had on the coral reefs of the windward side of Aruba.

These findings can certainly put things into perspective. The ground on which we have walked many times in the northern part of the island hold such rich history, history that dates back to a time that most of us cannot even imagine. As the scientists themselves have pointed out, these fossilized reefs on the windward side are truly an incredible and rare remnant of geological history, as they provide a clear view of how these reefs have formed.

This research is also important for the future of coral reefs on the island. By studying rising sea levels and climate impact on these coral reefs, we are able to take concrete action in protecting and preserving our coral reefs. So, if you are ever visiting one of the bocas or driving along the northern part of the island, please be conscious to help protect our natural historical remnant. Oh, and wear (coral-friendly) sunscreen! ☐

Visit the historic museum at Fort Zoutman!

(Oranjestad)—Located in the middle of downtown Oranjestad, situated right next to the government building "Cocolishi", is one of the oldest buildings of Aruba: Fort Zoutman. First constructed in 1796, this site has been used (or left unused) in many ways and have survived eras of war and attempted dismantling.

When anyone refers to Fort Zoutman, they are actually referring to two separate buildings that, over the years, have been merged: the fort and the tower.

That's right, the iconic 5-story, squared tower was not part of the original structure of the fort, and is actually called "Willem III Toren". Constructed in 1867, this tower was named after the then-reigning king of The Netherlands, Willem III. Willem III Toren was originally a light tower, but after a request from Lieutenant Governor Jan Helenus in 1866, it also became a bell tower.

The fort itself was originally constructed to protect the commerce bay of Paardenbaai from pirates and other disreputable



characters roaming the Caribbean Sea. Unlike the Willem III Toren, Fort Zoutman had a more tumultuous past, including the on-and-off reception of unwanted members of the English military several times (The Netherlands was at constant war with England back in the colonial era). Over the years, both the fort and the tower had functioned as different government center points, including a tax and stamps

office. For some time these two buildings also housed a police precinct and jail, and even experienced abandonment until the Cultural Center Aruba Foundation (CCA) petitioned for its renovation in 1964, turning the site into the Historic Museum it currently is. Despite its small size, The Historic Museum guards a rich depository of the commercial, military and social history of Oranjestad, offering a glance into how the

social culture of the town came to be. If you are interested in history and want to learn more about Aruba, then Fort Zoutman should definitely be included into your itinerary.

The museum is open Monday to Friday from 9am-6pm, and Saturday from 10am-2pm.

Source: The Old Fort of Aruba by Jan Hartog.



Experience Unrivalled Excitement and Win Big at LIV Casino, Barceló Aruba

Get ready to indulge in thrilling gaming experiences and a chance to strike it rich at LIV Casino, nestled within the luxurious Barceló Aruba resort. With a wide array of games and a captivating atmosphere, LIV Casino promises an unforgettable entertainment journey for visitors seeking excitement and good fortune.

LIV Casino boasts an impressive selection of 123 slot machines, each waiting to make someone a lucky winner. Among these, 114 are Dollar machines and 9 are Florin machines cater to various preferences and betting levels, offering a diverse gaming experience that suits every player's style.

The casino is not just about slots – for those who relish the thrill of traditional table games, LIV Casino delivers on every front. Step up to the challenge at the Blackjack Table, where



strategy meets chance, or take a spin at the Roulette Table for an electrifying game of luck.

Additionally, the Three Card Poker Table offers a unique blend of strategy and excitement, adding

a new dimension to the gaming floor.

Adding to the anticipation, every table at LIV Casino features its own progressive jackpot, promising the potential for monumental winnings that could change a player's life in an instant.

The gaming action at LIV Casino comes alive from 11 AM to 3 AM, ensuring non-stop excitement throughout the day and into the night. For those looking to experience the thrill of table games, the tables are open from 4:30 PM until closing, inviting players to try their hand at a variety of games while enjoying the vibrant casino ambiance.

"Try your luck with us at LIV Casino at Barceló Aruba," encourages Marc Charley, Casino General Manager of LIV Casino. "We have crafted an environment where guests can immerse themselves in the

thrill of gaming and experience the rush of winning big. Whether you're a seasoned player or a beginner, our diverse selection of games caters to all preferences."

LIV Casino at Barceló Aruba stands as a hub of entertainment, where visitors can not only try their luck but also revel in the world-class amenities and hospitality that the Barceló brand is renowned for.

About LIV Casino, Barceló Aruba:

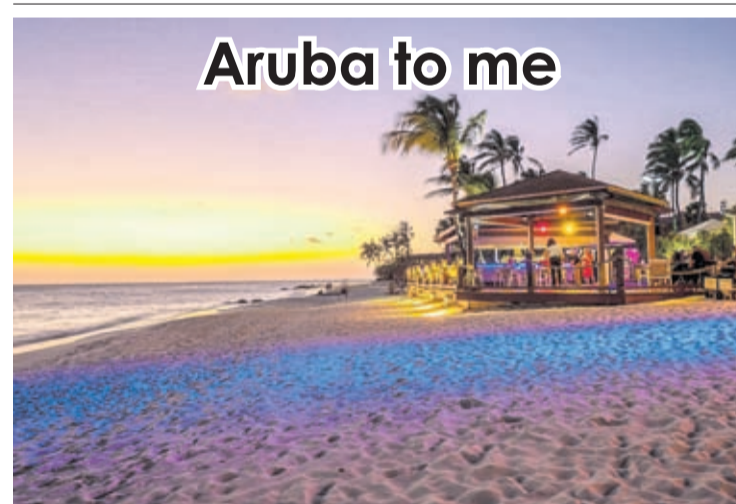
LIV Casino, located within the lavish Barceló Aruba resort, offers a premier gaming experience on the stunning island of Aruba. With a wide range of slot machines and table games, as well as the allure of progressive jackpots, LIV Casino provides endless entertainment for both novice and seasoned players. The casino operates from 11 AM to 3 AM, while table games are available from 4:30 PM till closing. □

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Coming Soon: Auntie Anne's Pretzels

The Aruba Tourism Authority honor loyal visitors on the island

Recently, Ms. Marouska Heyliger had the great pleasure to honor a Loyal and friendly visitors of Aruba as Distinguished Visitors at their home away from home.

The honorees:

Joseph and Brenda Farmer from Maryland

The symbolic honorary title is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism, as a token of appreciation to the guests who visit Aruba be-

tween 10-20-35 and more consecutive years.

Ms. Marouska Heyliger thanked them for choosing Aruba as their vacation destination and as their home away from home for so many years together with the members of Divi Phoenix Beach resort

Top reasons for returning provided by the honorees were:

Gorgeous beaches, Beautiful weather and Tranquility that the Island provides. □



Rhythms Circus Company Aruba: putting Aruba's name on the world stage



Rhythms Circus Company Aruba is a talented group of young people working daily to present their art in the form of acrobatics, dancing, acting and singing. After an impactful participation in one of America's biggest talent shows, they are now bringing their amazing talent to Aruba!

In a show full of light, music, and with performances to famous musical figures like Elvis Presley, Michael Jackson and Tina Turner, the group consisting of 15 people from various countries delights the audience with their artistic prowess at the Paseo

Herencia Mall, every Wednesday and Friday starting at 7pm. Each day has a different show, so you can attend both nights for the complete experience!

The group, under the leadership of directors and creators Diego Jaramillo and Yamila Hernandez are opening the doors to the ballroom to our local audience as well as our visitors so that everyone can have the privilege of experiencing this wonderful show.

Hernandez explained that the idea for this project started in 2010 when she came to work

in Aruba. After being on the island for a while she decided to stay and live here, and she met Diego Jaramillo, who is currently her partner. Together they came with the idea to establish a company together with other professional artists, with the goal of living from their art.

Hernandez says that the work is hard – all of the performers are professional artists, and while the production of the show is not a challenge for them, selling the idea proved difficult since at the time, there weren't any shows of its kind on the island.

America's Got Talent

Currently they are offering a show with music, choreography and at the end, they have a shocking acrobatics ending, one that was seen by thousands of people around the world when the group travelled to Los Angeles in the United States to represent Aruba in America's Got Talent. Hernandez said that the show was very important for them to meet the public present because people could experience this performance live and right before their eyes.

Their presentation in America's



Got Talent "was incredible" and they were able to meet the jury and many other artists staying there for three months. But the exhaustion and physical toll was so great that Diego suffered an accident, and because of this, they had to cancel all future commitments.

Reservations and tickets

To make a reservation to see this incredible display of creativity and acrobatics, scan the QR code which will take you directly to their website for a booking. To find more information about RCCA, please visit their Instagram page @rccaruba. □



Short history of the beginnings of baseball in Aruba

ORANJESTAD — Baseball was played on the island of Aruba in the 1930's, but only by United States expatriates working for LAGO and living inside the LAGO colony. Jim Bluejacket, the legendary US Indian who had played in two major league teams, worked for LAGO during 14 years and was a key factor in the growth of the popularity of the game in the colony. There is no record of Bluejacket ever playing outside the colony.



Outside the colony, the game of baseball was introduced to Aruba by Venezuelan immigrants and sailors on the Venezuelan fishing boats that used Aruba as their home port. They formed pick-up teams and played games on Sundays on an open field behind what is now the Court of Justice. One of the Venezuelans that comes to mind is Felix Garrido, grandfather of our current Prime-Minister.

In the late 30s the leader of this group was Raúl Aparicio, a cousin of Luis Aparicio who is now enshrined in the Hall of Fame in Cooperstown. The Aparicios were evidently very good at sports. Raúl had two brothers who also played baseball, René and Roman. Rosendo, his only brother who did not play baseball became a professional soccer player in the Venezuelan league. Rosendo was nicknamed "Cabeza de oro" (golden head) for a memorable header he scored to win a game for his team.

Interestingly, it was in Aruba

that Luis Aparicio played his first game outside of Venezuela. This took place in 1950 when he played shortstop for the school he attended. Later he played for "Cabimas" in a double-header of the Venezuelan Western League. These official games of the league were authorized to be played in Aruba by the Professional Baseball Organization of Venezuela. Several others who played in those games have also been enshrined.

Luis Aparicio's father was the super popular Luis "El Grande" (the great one) after whom the baseball stadium in Maracaibo is named. He and his brother owned the professional baseball teams "Gavilanes" which later became the "Aguilas", and the "Cabimas".

In the early '40s, another group, mostly immigrants from the Dominican Republic also became very active with pickup teams. Some of these remained active in baseball well into the early '50s; as umpires, managers even as players. Among these were Nestor

"Pantin" Guerrero who also had a musical band. Perhaps not so coincidentally, many of Pantin's players were also musicians. Luthai Pantophlet who umpired many years was a well-known drummer. Gaston Hazel was a bongo player; José Bryson and the brothers Nicholson, Teddy and Julio, all played several instruments.

In San Nicolas, baseball was played on the grounds next to where the LAGO Sport Park (now Laveist Sport Park) was officially inaugurated in March 1941.

During the WWII years, baseball got a big lift from the influx of Puerto Rican and US soldiers stationed here. As LAGO was playing a very important role in the struggle against Hitler, it was able to get all the sports equipment needed here to allow more people to participate.

In the '40s only the Lago Sports Park organized baseball championship games. The first teams to participate were Artraco, (Aruba Trading Co.), Esso Garage and Botica San

Lucas. In 1945 Venezuelan employees of the Lago refinery participated under the name of "Cafenol", a very popular Venezuelan coffee brand. Two other groups of Venezuelan immigrants formed the teams "Cerveceria" (named after the iconic team Cerveceria Caracas), and "Venezuela", although not all members of these teams were Venezuelans. This was also the year that the team sponsored by Roxy Café started to play as "Dodgers". Dodgers became the dominant baseball powerhouse till the 1950s.

Other teams that entered the baseball scene in the late 1940s: Pepsi Cola (Oranjestad) and St. Thomas Boys (former students of St. Thomas College, Oranjestad). "Baby Ruth" in San Nicolas played initially under the name "Camel" and "Barnes' Ramblers" the only team consisting of Lago Colony players to participate in the Lago Sport Park championships. "Red Rock Cola" was formed in Oranjestad in 1950. In 1952 the team Pepsi Cola became "Nesbitt's" and had players of seven countries, including two American expats from Lago Colony.

In 1950 a group of prominent members of the Aruba community founded the Amateur Baseball Bond of Aruba (ABBA) to give structure to the management of the sport and became the organizers of official championship games. While maintaining the ex-

isting teams in a league that was referred to as A-class, ABBA established a B-class league in which the "Budweiser" and "Braves" played the first years.

By 1952 Aruba became a member of the International Amateur Baseball Association and fielded a team managed by Joe Proterra, (former pitcher of "Barnes' Ramblers"), that would play for the first time ever in the Amateur Baseball World Series that took place in Havana, Cuba in September. Surprisingly, Aruba won two of its six games and became the darling of the Havana fans. Nell Harms of the Aruban team was named the "Outstanding player of the week" for his performance against Honduras. He allowed just two hits, struck out 15 and hit the only homerun of the game. Joe Cambria, the famous scout for the Washington Senators offered him a contract, but Nel was not interested, but the next year, at the Amateur Baseball World Series in Caracas, Venezuela, Nel and Ruben Phillips did sign and in 1954 they played professional baseball the Georgia-Florida League and the Texas-New Mexico League. They were the first Arubans to play professionally, but not the only ones.

During the games in Havana, contacts were made with the organizers of Little League Baseball in Cuba which eventually resulted in the introduction of Little League in Aruba. Little League of Aruba has been extremely successful: It has produced many players who earned baseball scholarships at universities in the United States, a few who played professionally in the Netherlands and different countries in the Caribbean and five who reached the major leagues: Calvin Maduro, Eugene Kingsale, Radhames Dijkhoff, Sydney Ponson, and Xander Bogaerts one of the brightest stars of Boston Red Sox.

Written by Mr. Clyde Harms



Today is going to be a good day

(Oranjestad)—Here's why: Aruba Today collected some things to do BEYOND the beach. Yes, we know. Aruba, located 15 miles north of Venezuela in the warm waters of the southern Caribbean, is home to beautiful white-sand beaches, 82-degree days, and thus ideal for the perfect beach day. But we are also blessed with some of the warmest people in the world and our island is 19.6 miles long and 6 miles across, with a total area of 70 square miles. Bit more to discover than the white stretch on the coastline we say. Let's mention some of these hidden gems.

Nature Calls

The Arikok National park is worth the ride. We love the hikes that are guided by the park's rangers whose job is to maintain trails and protect natural resources. The flora and fauna are beautiful and the historical sites tell you about the island's indigenous roots. The guided tours are even free of charge. If you are not up to walking, you can drive through the park, one way or another this park is a great place to spend an entire day. Cruising through the landscape you end up at some of the most stunning beaches like Dos Playa or Daimara Beach. In Total the park consists of 7907 acres protected nature with a richness of animals living in it. The Aruban whip-tail lizard (cododo), Aruban cat eye snake (santanero) and endangered rattle snake (cascabel) are just some of them, you can also admire these close in the park's Visitors' Center. For more information, visit the

website www.arubanationalpark.org

Philip's Animal Garden

To stay with the animals, let's hop to an amazing place. Something different to do, an experience that is to be enjoyed by people of all ages. Welcome to Philip's Animal Garden. We are not talking about a zoo here, this is actually a sanctuary for all types of creatures, from horses to peacocks, kangaroos to turtles, monkeys, goats, and many, many more different species. The place was founded in 2009 and it is the only organization rescuing and rehabilitating exotic animals in Aruba, which has resulted in an amazing collection of these animals. They provide a suitable living environment for all the rescued animals. Up until now the owner, Philip, has built this shelter with his own efforts; building all the cages from scratch, designing all structures and welding them with his own bare hands. His goal is to upgrade the facilities to a world-class animal shelter with veterinary care and round-the-clock staffs. With the input from the Aruban community and visitors they provide the best care for these animals. Please check out their website for more information: www.philipsanimalgarden.com.

The Lighthouse

No, you would not think of this as a hidden gem. The California Lighthouse is actually one of the most known highlights in Aruba and many repeated guests most probably took the ride uphill already. But, there is a significant change to this

tower. Since September 2016 you can climb the top. In 2015 Stichting Monumentenfonds started the restoration of the California Lighthouse. The project finished in September 2016 and the Lighthouse is now open for visitors to enjoy the beautiful view from the top. The construction of the California Lighthouse started in 1915. The name 'California' came from a vessel of the West India Company and Pacific Steamship Co. called 'California' that shipwrecked in the area in 1891. Therefore they came up with the idea of building a lighthouse that could indicate the island's eastern tip to ships with its light. www.arubalighthouse.com will give you more information.

Kayak in the Mangroves

Mangel Halto at Savaneta is definitely a place not to miss out on. The beautiful beach with the natural mangroves is simply a beauty, but if you are into a more active way to enjoy the nature: take a kayak. While you are doing some workout -as it might get a little windy and rough-, you will see the island from a different perspective. You can even make a stop to do some snorkeling at the reef. Its fun, it's healthy and for sure something else. There are several companies that offer kayak tours, we had good experience with The Shack Kayak Tours Aruba, find them on Facebook.

Take an "off-road" sightseeing tour

A must-do activity on the island is for sure taking an off-road sightseeing tour. If you have a rented car, you can drive through the north-eastern side of Aruba and explore the natural pools, caves, rock formations and gorgeous view of the Atlantic Ocean. To access most of these sights, like the natural pool (Conchi) and the Guadirikiri and Fontein caves, you must enter through the Arikok National Park and buy a day pass. Then you drive up the rugged road that leads you



through the white dunes, caves and along the wind turbines. Other locations, like the Ayo and Casibari Rock formation are situated more in the center of the island, and are free for guests, 24 hours a day.

Go for a shopping spree in the city center

Need a new bathing suit? Head to the city center of Oranjestad, where there is countless of different stores—both high end and more affordable—that can offer you the service you deserve! Local shopping stores often offer a more

affordable price, and have a variety of clothes, shoes, bathing suites, purses and more. Along the Royal Plaza strip, there are numerous jewelry stores with great quality jewelry. In the Renaissance mall, you can shop high-end luxury brands, like Dolce & Gabbana, Kate Spade, Louis Vuitton and more.

Around the high-rise hotel area near Palm Beach, the Paseo Herencia Mall contain a variety of shopping stores, restaurants, small food stands and even a movie theater! □



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Skating category
- 6 Angel toppers
- 11 Snowy bird
- 12 Make suitable
- 13 Mob foe
- 15 Filmmaker Burns
- 16 Pale
- 17 Historic time
- 18 Water-proofing stuff
- 20 Beam of light
- 21 Tick off
- 22 Lug
- 23 Incline
- 26 Grew dimmer
- 27 Sunset site
- 28 Card symbol
- 29 Drama division
- 30 West African nation
- 34 Goat sound
- 35 Finish
- 36 "Caught you!"
- 37 2, 3, or 5
- 40 Fielder's goof
- 41 Like the ice caps

- 42 Ocean trenches
- 43 Squalid

DOWN

- 1 Quick kisses
- 2 Be of one mind
- 3 "Three Sisters" sister
- 4 "Stand" band
- 5 "Harvey" star
- 6 Regular hangout
- 7 TV spots
- 8 Subsequently
- 9 Run
- 10 Got off course

E	V	A	D	E	B	A	R	T	
D	I	D	I	N	I	N	A	W	E
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F	O	L	D	I	C	E			
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M	I	R	E	D		L	O	R	E
E	N	T	R	Y		E	R	E	C
	G	O	R	E		T	E	N	T

Yesterday's answer

- 14 Vault setting
- 19 Dryer fuzz
- 22 Race goal
- 23 Under a pile of work
- 24 "Smiley's People" author
- 25 "Top Hat" star
- 26 Pitcher's motions
- 28 Ivy League school
- 30 Prophets
- 31 Roof feature
- 32 In the future
- 33 Bird on a court
- 38 Swabbing tool
- 39 One of the Stooges

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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		21			22				
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34			35				36		
37		38					39		
40					41				
42					43				

9-5

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's. X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

9-5

CRYPTOQUOTE

E Q T M G O G D M G P D Q Z

E Q T M X Z Z G D M E Q T M G O G D M

G P T X N X N C X T G D M H G Z K Q J Z

I B G D — U X F G B U T J Y

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: SEPTEMBER SHOWED UP RIGHT ON SCHEDULE. AND LASTED A WHOLE MONTH — TENNY WINGFIELD

Liz Weston: 3 ways to reduce taxes on social security

By LIZ WESTON
of NerdWallet

Social Security benefits were once tax-free. That changed in 1983, when Congress decided to tax a portion of benefits for the highest-income recipients. Back then, fewer than 10% of beneficiaries were affected. Lawmakers failed to update the law to account for inflation, however, so today most Social Security beneficiaries have to pay federal income tax on at least some of their benefits, says Ted Sarenski, author of American Institute of CPA's "Guide to Social Security Planning."

There are a few ways to reduce that tax bite, however, especially if you can plan ahead.

HOW SOCIAL SECURITY TAXES WORK

Social Security taxes are based on your annual "combined income." Combined income comprises:

- Your adjusted gross income, which includes your earnings, investment income, retirement plan withdrawals and other taxable income.
- Any nontaxable interest you receive, such as interest on municipal bonds.
- One half of your Social Security benefits.

For couples filing a joint return, a combined income between \$32,000 and \$44,000 means up to 50% of benefits may be taxable. For higher combined incomes, up to 85% of benefits may be taxable. Single filers may pay tax on up to 50% of benefits when combined income is between \$25,000 and \$34,000, and up to 85% of benefits beyond that.



This undated file photo provided by NerdWallet shows Liz Weston, a columnist for personal finance website NerdWallet.com.

Associated Press

People who live solely on Social Security don't have to pay income taxes on their benefits, Sarenski notes. But even a relatively small amount of other income can cause benefits to become taxable.

DEFUSE THE TAX TORPEDO

The unique way Social Security benefits are taxed leads to something known as the "tax torpedo" — a sharp rise in marginal tax rates followed by a decline, says William Reichenstein, professor emeritus at Baylor University and co-author of "Social Security Strategies: How to Optimize Retirement Benefits." Marginal tax rates are what you pay on each additional dollar of taxable income you receive.

Many middle-income households can face marginal tax rates that are 50% to 85% higher than their regular tax bracket because of this tax torpedo, Reichenstein says.

"You take another dollar

out of your tax deferred account and it causes another 85 cents of Social Security to be taxed, so your taxable income goes up by \$1.85," he says. Moderate-income households may be able to defuse the effects by delaying the start of Social Security benefits as long as possible, Reichenstein says. Someone who waits until age 70 to start benefits, withdrawing money from retirement funds in the meantime, not only gets a larger Social Security check but could save hundreds or even thousands of dollars a year in taxes, Reichenstein says. If you're in the 10% to 22% federal tax brackets, consider talking to a tax pro or financial planner about how to mitigate the potential tax burden.

CONTRIBUTE TO A ROTH

Having at least some money in a Roth IRA or Roth 401(k) can help reduce taxes on Social Security benefits. Withdrawals from these accounts are tax-free in retirement and aren't included in your combined income, Sarenski says. You can't contribute to a retirement account if you don't have earned income, so people should diversify their retirement accounts long before they stop working, he says. □

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Farms with natural landscape features provide sanctuary for some Costa Rica rainforest birds

By **CHRISTINA LARSON**
AP Science Writer

Small farms with natural landscape features such as shade trees, hedgerows and tracts of intact forest provide a refuge for some tropical bird populations, according to an 18-year study in Costa Rica.

For almost two decades, ornithologist James Zook has been collecting detailed records on nearly 430 tropical bird species found on small farms, plantations and undisturbed forests in the country.

While birds thrive the most in undisturbed rainforests, Zook said some species usually found in forests can establish populations in "diversified farms" that partially mimic a natural forest environment.

"How you farm matters," said Nicholas Hendershot, a Stanford University ecologist and co-author of the study published Monday in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

"In these diversified farms, you see growth over the long term in bird species with specialized needs," such as safe and shady nooks to build nests and a variety of food sources, Hendershot said.

That trend was "in stark contrast to what we saw in intensive agriculture," or monocrop pineapple and banana plantations, he said.

The findings may seem intuitive, but Natalia Ocampo-Penuela, a University of California, Santa Cruz conservation ecologist not involved in the study, said it's extremely rare to have detailed long-term data from tropical regions to show that varied farming landscapes can sustain some forest bird populations.

"With 18 years of data, you can show the species is persisting in that area, not simply passing by," she said.

Three-quarters of the 305 species found in diversified farms showed stable or growing populations over



This photo provided by researchers shows a white-tipped sicklebill (*Eutoxeres aquila*) in San Vito, Costa Rica, in February 2018.

the time of study. These include the collared aracari, a small toucan-like bird, with a yellow chest and enormous beak, as well as several members of the manakin family small brightly colored forest birds known for elaborate courtship dances.

"It's a huge contribution to have documented that some birds aren't just going there, but staying there and populations are growing," said Ruth Bennett, an ecologist at the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center, who was not involved in the research.

Still, such habitat sanctuaries don't offset overall population losses from the conversion of primary forests to plantations, the authors stressed. "A pineapple plantation is like a 'bird desert' here," said Zook. Increasingly, scientists say conserving species will require paying attention to landscapes with a human footprint not just untouched areas.

"Modern conservation has to happen not only inside the fences of protected areas, but within agricultural areas and even urban

areas, where there's potential habitat for at least some species," said the University of California's Ocampo-Penuela.

Associated Press



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In 'Equalizer 3,' Denzel Washington's assassin goes to Italy

By **LINDSEY BAHR**
AP Film Writer

Filmmaker Antoine Fuqua has been dreaming about taking the Equalizer abroad for years. The action franchise (very loosely based on a 1980s television series) starring Denzel Washington as the reluctant assassin Robert McCall had rooted itself in humble domestic beginnings, in Boston. But after two films and \$382.7 million in box-office receipts in the past decade, the time seemed ripe to travel. "Denzel is an international movie star," Fuqua told The Associated Press. "We thought it would be nice to see a man of color in a story that's more international. Why not take this character around the world? Luckily, Sony loved the idea."

And there was only one place that was ever seriously on the list: Italy. Washington, Fuqua said, goes every summer and has since his kids were babies. He loves the culture, the people, the food. He even speaks some Italian.

"He just feels right there," Fuqua said.

And for Fuqua, it was the stuff of filmmaking dreams to get to shoot in Cinecittà Studios in Rome and bump up against cinema history walking where Fellini and so many other greats have before him. In Naples, they found an authentically 1970s New York grit-



This image released by Sony Pictures Entertainment shows Denzel Washington, left, and director Antoine Fuqua on the set of "The Equalizer 3."

teness that required little to no production design for a pivotal showdown. And on the Amalfi coast, they stumbled on the small village of their, and McCall's, fantasies in the picturesque Atrani.

It's the kind of place you'd believe someone like McCall (or anyone really) might feel immediately tied to and protective of, which is what happens in "Equalizer 3," debuting in theaters nationwide Friday. The difference is McCall is more uniquely suited to take on the Camorra. Single-handedly, of course. "When we

went to that small town, we knew that was the place," Fuqua said. "The people were so beautiful, we were sitting around and they would just bring us coffee and espresso. We didn't even ask for it. Or big giant lemons because it was so hot. You fall in love with the people in a town like that." The only complaint, which isn't even really a complaint, was about the steps. One of the jewels of Atrani is a medieval church perched on the mountain-side high above the beach that they decided would be perfect for an impor-

tant scene between McCall and Dakota Fanning's CIA analyst. But the only way to get there is to climb up over 700 steps. It wasn't a pleasant journey with all the equipment necessary to shoot a scene, but it was a good reminder of purpose for Fuqua and his cinematographer, three-time Oscar winner Robert Richardson. They wanted to show a real place, not a vacation destination.

"It's not a travelogue," Fuqua said. "It's beautiful in the Mediterranean, but for the people who live there it's real life. The fisherman

live off what they catch. They live in small houses. They walk up those steps every day." The film brings together a core team with decades of history, including producers Todd Black and Jason Blumenthal. In addition to the "Equalizer" films Fuqua directed Washington in "Training Day," which would win him his first lead actor Oscar, as well as in the recent remake of "The Magnificent Seven."

And Black has produced all of the films Washington has directed as well as several others. It was Washington who introduced Black and Fuqua for the first "Equalizer", which all assumed would just be one film, not a franchise.

"You can't think about franchises, or awards, when you're making a movie. If you're making a movie to win an award, or even to get nominated, or have a franchise, you're dead in the water going in probably," Black said. "Not 100% of the time, but you shouldn't think that way." Instead, they took it one script at a time and "let the audience decide." The audience, it seemed, liked seeing Washington as McCall more than once. Both the first and second film made over \$190 million each against production budgets that didn't exceed \$65 million and Sony was interested in a third. □

Associated Press

The Rolling Stones will release their first studio album in 18 years, 'Hackney Diamonds'



Mick Jagger, left, Ronnie Wood, center, and Keith Richards, right, of the band "The Rolling Stones," perform onstage during the last concert of their "Sixty" European tour in Berlin, Germany, Aug. 3, 2022.

Associated Press

By **MARIA SHERMAN**
AP Music Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The wait is over: The Rolling Stones will soon release new music.

On Monday, the band announced they are preparing to release their first album of original material in 18 years since 2005's "A Bigger Bang."

Titled "Hackney Diamonds," the band will share details of the release at an event in East London's Hackney district on

Wednesday, where Mick Jagger, Keith Richards and Ronnie Wood will be interviewed live by "The Tonight Show" host Jimmy Fallon.

The event will be livestreamed exclusively on YouTube on Wednesday at 2:30 p.m. BST, 9:30 a.m. EST and 6:30 a.m. PST.

"Hackney may be at the heart of Hackney Diamonds, but this is a truly global moment we want to share with fans around the world via YouTube," the

Rolling Stones shared in a statement.

The announcement of "Hackney Diamonds" follows a cryptic teaser campaign, in which the band's iconic mouth and tongue logo was projected onto the façade of major landmarks in cities around the world, including New York, London and Paris.

The album is also the Stones' first since the death of drummer Charlie Watts in 2021. □

Grand Slam tournaments are getting hotter. US Open players and fans may feel that this week

By **HOWARD FENDRICH, MARY KATHERINE WILDEMAN and BRIAN MAHONEY**
Associated Press Writers

NEW YORK (AP) — Andy Murray prepared for the steamy conditions often found at the U.S. Open by simulating the “brutal heat and humidity” in New York this time of year with the help of, well, an actual steam room at his home. The 36-year-old British tennis star set the humidity in there at 70% and spent hours riding a stationary bike nearby with the thermostat cranked up to 95 degrees Fahrenheit (35 Celsius), making the air feel as muggy as it does every summer around Flushing Meadows, where the year’s last Grand Slam tournament entered its second week on Monday. “Just to try and help with the heat adaptation,” explained Murray, who claimed the title in New York in 2012 but lost in mild conditions in the second round this time. If the start of competition at the 2023 U.S. Open offered a bit of a reprieve for athletes, ball crews and spectators alike, thanks to highs mostly in the 70s F (20s C) “It is a little cooler than usual; that’s definitely easier to play in,” Belgian player Elise Mertens said last week that changed Sunday, when it hit 90 F (32 C). The temperature was forecast to soar even more in the coming days.

That’s not a surprise: An Associated Press analysis shows the average high temperatures felt during the U.S. Open and the three other major tennis tournaments steadily have gotten higher and more dangerous in recent decades, reflecting the climate change that created record heat waves around the globe this summer. For athletes, it can keep them from playing their best and, worse, increases the likelihood of heat-related illness.

The AP tracked the thermal comfort index, which



Andy Murray, of Britain, wipes sweat from his brow during a break in play against Corentin Moutet, of France, during the first round of the U.S. Open tennis championships, Tuesday, Aug. 29, 2023, in New York.

measures air temperature in degrees while also taking into account humidity, radiation, wind and other factors that affect how the body responds. It looked at each Grand Slam event dating to 1988, the first year all four had 128-player fields for women and men. Collectively, the maximum temperatures at those tournaments has risen by nearly 5 degrees F (nearly 3 C).

“People hear that and they don’t think it’s very much. It doesn’t necessarily register as alarming. Sometimes that 3- or 4-degree change can cause a doubling or even tripling of the number of hot days we experience,” said Daniel Bader, a climate scientist at Columbia University. “New York City’s temperatures have been rising, and that trend is projected to continue into the future.”

Other AP findings:

From 1988 to 1992, daily highs in the thermal comfort index passed the threshold for strong heat stress, which is 90 F (32 C), on 7% of days with Grand Slam matches. From 2018 to 2022 that figure was 16%.

The U.S. Open’s overall rise of nearly 3 F (1.5 C) since 1988 means it isn’t even the

Grand Slam site where the heat is increasing most rapidly. That’s the Australian Open, where the average high temperatures jumped by more than 6 F (about 3.5 C).

Still, the U.S. Open often was the hottest of the four majors in any given year. Players can tell.

“I remember the year I won, the last four days it was super hot and super humid,” said 2016 U.S. Open champion Stan Wawrinka of Switzerland. “It’s one of the toughest tournaments, fitness-wise. Your body really loses a lot of energy.”

The U.S. Open’s spot late in the tennis season creates an accumulation of wear-and-tear and general fatigue, but the sweltering conditions at Flushing Meadows likely deserve some blame for a high number of in-match retirements there. Since 1988, there have been 17 occasions in which at least 10 players at one Slam stopped during matches, more than half of them at the U.S. Open. The three highest totals came in New York: 16 in 2015, 15 in 2011, and 14 in 2018, when a half-dozen men stopped on Day 2 because of heat issues. “We’re seeing a lot

more heat-related illnesses across all sports,” said Elan Goldwaser, a sports medicine physician at Columbia University Medical Center who works with athletes on the U.S. ski team and at Fordham University.

The blue hard courts at the U.S. Open absorb heat more than the grass at Wimbledon or the clay at the French Open, making it feel as much as 15 degrees F (about 8 C) hotter than the air temperature, according to the U.S. Tennis Association. Athletes “are essentially playing on a hot plate,” Goldwaser said.

“Their ability to hit the ball as hard starts to go down. Their reaction time starts to go down,” said Jon Felling, the clinical vice chair of emergency medicine at the University of New Mexico. “Getting heated up, your body’s first response is to try and cool down, and the way it does that is by pumping blood to all of your skin. Your heart just has to immediately start working harder.”

The fans in the stands need to be careful, too, especially if alcohol is involved. On one cooler-than-usual yet sunny day during qualifying rounds ahead of the

Aug. 28 to Sept. 10 main draw in New York, spectators grabbed free sunscreen samples and cooled off near misting fans.

“I have empathy, sympathy ... for tennis players,” said Ola Yinka, a 45-year-old filmmaker from Chicago. “I used to play tennis as a kid, so I remember I would have fun with my dad. But at the same time, after like 10 minutes, I was like, ‘I don’t even want to play.’”

At the U.S. Open, players get 75 seconds to rest between games and two minutes between sets. That’s time enough to hydrate with water or electrolyte-packed drinks, enjoy cold air pushed through a tube or wrap an ice-filled towel around their neck.

It’s not enough time, though, to lower the body’s core temperature.

So physiotherapists watch for dizziness, cramping and other signs of heat illness.

“We might suggest that they’re not safe to play,” said Reshma Rathod, a WTA physiotherapist. “They may not want to stop.”

U.S. Open tournament referee Jake Garner said chair umpires serve as “the first line of defense” if someone is in real danger, but “in general, we leave (it up to) the players.”

While some athletes, like Murray, find unusual ways to train, others figure the acclimatization that comes from dealing with heat and humidity at tournament after tournament, week after week, year after year, or from living in places like Florida a favorite base for many will help.

“For a recreational player who may be watching on TV, to think about playing a tennis match when it’s 92 degrees out and 95% humidity they might think that’s just unfathomable,” said Todd Ellenbecker, the ATP vice president for medical services. “But our players ... play in that kind of heat throughout the entire year.” □

Acuña and Betts battling back-and-forth as NL MVP favorites

By **BETH HARRIS**
AP Sports Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The NL MVP race is going down to the wire, with Atlanta's Ronald Acuña Jr. and Mookie Betts of the Los Angeles Dodgers in a back-and-forth battle over the final month of the regular season.

Acuña is having a career year playing for a 90-win Braves team with the best record in baseball that's a virtual lock to win the NL East. Betts is posting his best numbers since winning AL MVP with the Boston Red Sox in 2018. The Dodgers are cruising with a 14 1/2-game lead on their way to clinching their 10th NL West title in 11 years.

The two dynamic stars put on a head-to-head show during their weekend series at Dodger Stadium, with Acuña shining brightest as the Braves won three of four games.

Betts also had his moments, though, and Acuña is enjoying their chase.

"It's something really nice just because I feel like Mookie and I have a really nice relationship," he said through an interpreter. "Whenever we get the chance to talk, we do."

Betts made it clear their competition isn't personal. "I'm not playing against



Atlanta Braves' Ronald Acuña Jr., left, celebrates after stealing third as Los Angeles Dodgers third baseman Max Muncy stands by during the fifth inning of a baseball game Friday, Sept. 1, 2023, in Los Angeles.

Ronald Acuña," he said after the series opener. "I'm playing against the Braves. We're trying to beat the Braves. He's a great, awesome person, take absolutely nothing away from him, but I'm not playing against him." Acuña set the tone in the first game, smashing a grand slam in an 8-7 victory only hours after getting married near Los Angeles in a small ceremony that caught even teammates by surprise. That made him the first player

in major league history with 30 home runs and 60 stolen bases in a season.

Betts hit two homers in the same game, the first of three straight losses by the Dodgers.

Acuña went deep in the next two games, too highlighted by a 454-foot shot to center field that came off his bat at 121.2 mph, the hardest-hit ball in the majors this season.

In the finale Sunday, the Dodgers avoided a sweep with a 3-1 win as Betts went

3 for 4 with an RBI. Acuña was hitless in four at-bats with a strikeout.

Acuña, the 25-year-old right fielder from Venezuela, was the 2018 NL Rookie of the Year, the same season Betts was AL MVP while helping the Red Sox win the World Series.

At 30, Betts is posting his best numbers since that MVP season.

He hit .455 in August while setting Los Angeles Dodgers records for hits and runs (35) in a month. Betts was

just the third player in MLB history with a .450 batting average, 50-plus hits and 10-plus homers in a month, joining Lou Gehrig (June 1930) and Babe Ruth (July 2023 and '24), according to ESPN Stats & Info.

Acuña and Betts either lead or are among the top 10 in various National League categories.

Acuña leads in hits (184), on-base percentage (.419) and stolen bases (63).

Betts leads the NL in OPS (1.021) and slugging (.614), ranks fourth with a career-high 38 home runs, and is second in runs (117) and fifth in walks (78).

Defensively, Betts has the edge over his younger rival. He's playing strong outfield defense and his fielding percentage in right is 1.000. Acuña's percentage is .981.

Betts has also spent time at shortstop and second base this season, moves that manager Dave Roberts credits for keeping him fresh and engaged.

"I won MVP in right field," Betts said. "It doesn't really matter where I play. The (batter's) box is the box and defense is defense. They're two separate things and I keep them that way." Acuña has taken his game to the next level in his sixth major league season. □

Associated Press

Dodgers pitcher Julio Urías arrested near Los Angeles stadium

By **BETH HARRIS**
AP Sports Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Los Angeles Dodgers pitcher Julio Urías was arrested near BMO Stadium, where Lionel Messi was playing in a Major League Soccer game with numerous celebrities in attendance.

Exposition Park public safety said its officers arrested Urías at about 11 p.m. Sunday inside the park, which is home to the stadium. The department would not immediately disclose what charges Urías was arrested on, but said it would release more details Monday.

Urías posted \$50,000 bail and was released shortly before 5 a.m. Monday,

according to Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department booking records. He is due in court on Sept. 27.

The 27-year-old Mexican-born pitcher was arrested in May 2019 for domestic battery. Urías was suspended 20 games by Major League Baseball, but he wasn't prosecuted by the Los Angeles city attorney on the condition that he complete a 52-week domestic violence counseling program.

The Dodgers were traveling Monday to Miami where they open a six-game road trip Tuesday against the Marlins. Urías had been set to make his next start Thurs-

day in the series finale.

"We are aware of an incident involving Julio Urías. While we attempt to learn all the facts, he will not be traveling with the team," the team said in a statement while declining further comment.

Urías is 11-8 with a 4.60 ERA this season. He is pitching on a \$14.25 million, one-year deal in his final season of salary arbitration. He helped the Dodgers win the World Series during the pandemic-delayed 2020 season.

The left-hander had his best season in 2021 when he led the National League with a 20-3 record. □



Los Angeles Dodgers starting pitcher Julio Urías throws to the plate during the first inning of a baseball game against the Atlanta Braves Friday, Sept. 1, 2023, in Los Angeles.

Associated Press